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Chair: Mr. Iwasawa

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant (*continued*)

Third periodic report of Lebanon (CCPR/C/LBN/3; CCPR/C/LBN/Q/3 and CCPR/C/LBN/Q/3/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Lebanon took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Baddoura** (Lebanon), introducing his country's third periodic report (CCPR/C/LBN/3), said that although it had been late in submitting its report, his Government remained committed to meeting its obligations under the international human rights instruments to which it was a party, despite considerable internal challenges. Many important developments with a bearing on civil and politic rights had unfolded in Lebanon since the third periodic report had been submitted in 2016. A new Government of national accord had been formed, bringing with it electoral and political reform. For example, a new electoral law had been adopted, providing for the introduction of a proportional electoral system, granting a greater mandate to electoral supervisory committees and injecting new life into the political sphere, which had, among other things, led to a significantly larger number of women standing in the parliamentary elections scheduled for May 2018. In addition, two new Ministries had been established: one specializing in human rights, the other in women's affairs. Despite considerable security challenges, the Government had resisted calls for the establishment of a state of emergency; a testament to its commitment to upholding political rights and freedoms.

3. In October 2016, a new law had been adopted providing for the establishment of a national human rights institution. In line with the Paris Principles, the institution was financially and administratively independent. That same law had also provided for the establishment of a standing committee on torture, pursuant to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, which Lebanon had ratified in 2008. Lebanon had also submitted its initial report to the Committee against Torture and, in 2017, had adopted a law providing for the criminalization of acts of torture.

4. The principles of freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and freedom of association were enshrined in the Lebanese Constitution and were regulated by the Lebanese legal framework. There had been incidents involving persons who had transgressed the boundaries set by the legislation regulating those freedoms, but such matters were settled in the courts. Laws regulating the media and access to information had been adopted in 2016 and 2017, respectively, and the Government was currently considering a bill designed to provide protection for whistle-blowers. Although most protests proceeded peacefully, law enforcement officers had been obliged to use force on protesters in 2015 in response to attacks on their person and on private and public property. Any officers whose actions had constituted an excessive use of force had been placed under investigation and sanctioned, if necessary. In theory, public sector employees were prohibited from establishing associations or going on strike. In practice, however, they had held strikes to support demands for an increased minimum wage in 2017 and had established a league in 2012. Freedom of belief was also protected in Lebanon. In some cases, citizens had been allowed to remove all reference to their religious affiliation from their identity documents, which was indicative of developments in civil status legislation. However, Lebanese society remained divided on the issue of a unified civil-status law.

5. The preamble of the Lebanese Constitution called for the equality of all citizens without discrimination and many of the legislatorial reforms of recent years had been passed with a view to achieving equality between men and women and amending any legal provisions that might hamper Lebanon's progress in that regard. The Government had established a ministerial committee to amend the Nationality Act as a first step towards granting Lebanese women married to foreign nationals the right to transfer their nationality to their children. Furthermore, a new law had been adopted allowing migrants of Lebanese descent to claim Lebanese nationality in certain circumstances.

6. The role of women in Lebanese society was no longer limited to family affairs: women could enter the labour market and hold positions of leadership in the private and public sectors. In recent years, substantially more women had joined security agencies, the military, the judiciary and other positions within the public service. The Government continued to build on its work to ensure women's participation in political life. Furthermore, Act No. 293 of 2014, on the protection of women from domestic violence, had been amended to correct a number of shortcomings. The courts had passed down judgments allowing women to seek compensation for all forms of violence, including domestic abuse, and the Ministry of Women's Affairs had submitted a bill that set out sanctions for sexual harassment in the workplace and in public places for approval by the Parliament.

7. Act No. 164 of 2011 established sanctions for the crimes of modern slavery, enslavement and human trafficking. The Government had also adopted a strategy to better secure its borders and had provided training to its border control guards. Moreover, the Government had taken steps to protect migrant workers in Lebanon by signing a number of bilateral and multilateral agreements with their countries of origin.

8. The Lebanese authorities had taken steps to solve the problem of undocumented children, by issuing legal instructions to the relevant authorities with a view to expediting their registration. The arrival of Syrian refugees in Lebanon had led to an increase in child marriages, which the Government planned to tackle through a new bill prohibiting marriage between persons under the age of 18.

9. Lebanon's achievements had to be considered in the context of the considerable challenges facing the country. Over one and a half million refugees from Syria and around half a million refugees from other countries were currently hosted in Lebanon, whose Government and people had demonstrated unprecedented levels of resilience. The Government was aware that challenges remained, but it was seeking support through international cooperation programmes and partnerships with civil society. Ultimately, Lebanon had a deep-rooted tradition of social solidarity that would help it to overcome threats to civil and political rights. The delegation looked forward to engaging in a constructive dialogue with the Committee.

10. **Ms. Pazartzis** said that the significant delay in the submission of the State party's third periodic report was regrettable. Nevertheless, the Committee welcomed the legal and institutional reforms undertaken by Lebanon since its last reporting cycle. Many challenges remained, however, such as maintaining a balance between cultural and religious pluralism, effectively guaranteeing the human rights established under the Covenant and addressing the issues arising from the unprecedented flow of refugees from neighbouring countries.

11. Turning to the Committee's list of issues (CCPR/C/LBN/Q/3), she said that she would appreciate clarification of the relationship between the Lebanese Constitution and the international human rights instruments to which Lebanon was party, as well as the precise nature of the "constitutional value" accorded to the Covenant, as referred to in paragraph 6 of the State party's replies to the list of issues (CCPR/C/LBN/Q/3/Add.1). She was interested to know whether there had been any cases in which the incompatibility of the Constitution with the Covenant had been invoked before national courts and how any such conflicts had been resolved. Furthermore, she would welcome clarification as to whether the Covenant had prevalence over the provisions of domestic legislation and administrative decisions. In paragraphs 8 and 9 of its replies, the State party had indicated that Lebanese court rulings often drew upon the provisions of the Covenant; examples of such rulings would be appreciated. In addition, she was interested to know whether the State party had taken steps to raise awareness of the Covenant among judges, prosecutors and lawyers. She would also welcome information on the practical steps taken to ensure that the national human rights institution was operational, as well as information regarding its membership, budget and mandate. Lastly, she wished to know whether civil society had been made aware of the Covenant and whether it had been involved in the preparation of the third periodic report.

12. The State party's efforts to overcome confessionalism had been slow, mainly as the result of political instability. Following his mission to Lebanon in 2015, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief had noted that the cautious approach taken to

preserve the interreligious balance in various social spheres might help to ensure stability, but could also weaken the general feeling of common citizenship and lead to discrimination. With that in mind, she would be grateful if the delegation could provide further information on Act No. 44 of 2017, which she understood to be the new electoral law. Specifically, she wished to know how the application of the principle of proportionality was envisaged and in which sectors it would be applied. For example, would it affect all 18 denominations recognized under Lebanese law and would it increase the proportion of women who held seats in the Parliament? It would also be useful to know whether the forthcoming parliamentary elections, scheduled for May 2018, would be conducted under the representational system. On a similar note, she wished to know how the draft law on administrative decentralization would help the State party to fulfil its obligations under the Covenant, particularly those relating to discrimination, equal treatment of all citizens and political inclusion.

13. Civil society had reported continuing discrimination against women arising from the State party's various personal status laws, which erected barriers to women's ability to terminate marriage and to ensure their rights concerning their children after divorce. In that connection, she was interested to know what steps the State party planned to take, if any, towards the adoption of a unified personal status code. Furthermore, the Committee was interested to know what the State party was doing to achieve equal marital rights for men and women, noting that Lebanon had entered a reservation with regard to article 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, on the elimination of discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations. She was also interested to know whether the State party planned to provide the option of legally recognized civil marriage for all Lebanese citizens. According to reports, couples who succeeded in claiming their right to register a civil marriage contracted abroad were subject to applicable personal status laws upon their return to Lebanon. Sometimes those couples were issued with a civil certificate that did not constitute proof of marriage, but which altered the legal status of their children in such a way as to complicate their registration in schools. She would appreciate the delegation's comments on how the State party intended to address that issue. She understood that progress had been made towards prohibiting marriage between persons under the age of 18 years, but was also aware that the minimum age for marriage depended on personal status laws. In that connection, she wished to know whether the State party planned to introduce a minimum age for marriage. In addition, she would welcome further information regarding the Government's plans to amend the Nationality Act. Lastly, she wished to know whether the Court of Cassation or another high-level court had been empowered to exercise oversight of religious courts' proceedings and decisions on matters of personal status.

14. **Ms. Brands Kehris** said that, although the State party had indicated in its report that the principle of non-discriminatory equality was established under the Constitution, no further information had been provided in response to the Committee's questions on comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation. Furthermore, the term discrimination was not defined or indeed used in the Constitution; only the terms distinction and preference were mentioned. As the Constitution did not include the list of grounds for non-discrimination set out in the State party's replies, those grounds were presumably contained in statutory legislation. She would therefore appreciate clarification as to which pieces of legislation prohibited discrimination and established its definition and scope. She also wished to know how the prohibition of discrimination was enforced in practice, what remedies were available to victims of discrimination, whether they were ever used and, if so, to what result.

15. She wondered whether the State party planned to adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that met the requirements of articles 2, 3 and 26 of the Covenant, following a number of recommendations made by various treaty bodies in 2016 and 2017 to that effect. That would entail adopting legislation that defined direct, indirect and multiple discrimination and that included an open-ended list of prohibited grounds for discrimination, including sexual orientation and gender identity, in line with those listed in the Covenant. Comprehensive legislation would have to cover education, employment, the provision of services and goods and other spheres and should extend to the private sector, in addition to setting out reparations for victims. Furthermore, she wished to know whether the State

party planned to amend its Constitution to include a list of the minimum prohibited grounds for discrimination, as it had been recommended to do by various treaty bodies.

16. With regard to the situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer persons, she would be grateful if the delegation could comment on reports that the number of arrests made under article 534 of the Criminal Code, which prohibited "sexual intercourse contrary to the order of nature", had increased since 2012. How many persons had been arrested under that article in 2017? It would be useful if the delegation could also comment on reports that arrests under that article were often made on the basis of subjective criteria such as physical appearance and that mobile telephone data accessed without judicial authorization was sometimes used as evidence against those arrested. In addition, she wished to know the overall number of cases initiated under article 534 since 2012, including those in which a fine had been imposed, and would appreciate a response to reports that even fines imposed under that article remained on record for several years.

17. In the light of recent reports that the authorities had cancelled events organized by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer persons on security grounds, she wished to know what efforts were being made to ensure that such persons were able to exercise their right to freedom of assembly and association without discrimination and what measures had been taken or planned to combat discrimination and hate speech motivated by sexual orientation or gender identity. She wondered what measures had been taken or planned to protect that community from violence and extortion; what efforts had been made to ensure that perpetrators of such acts were identified, prosecuted and punished; and whether the State party would consider adopting legislation to prohibit hate crimes, including hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation or gender identity. Lastly, she wished to know whether the State party planned to decriminalize same-sex sexual relations between consenting adults, including by abolishing article 534 of the Criminal Code.

18. **Ms. Abdo Rocholl** said that she would appreciate information on the mandates of the ministerial portfolios for human rights and women's rights and on the budgets allocated to those portfolios. It was clear that, despite the State party's assertions to the contrary, women continued to face stereotypes regarding their role in society and remained underrepresented in the political sphere. In that context, she wished to know the number of women who held elected office, including in the parliament and municipal councils, and the number and percentage of women in public office and decision-making positions. She would appreciate additional information on the proposal to set aside a certain number of seats for women in the parliamentary and municipal councils and in the Government. In particular, she wondered whether the State party aimed to achieve the equal representation of men and women in public and political life and whether it planned to introduce a system of gender alternation in electoral lists. Further information about any bills under review in that connection would be welcome.

19. It was unclear whether the various amendments proposed to Act No. 293 of 2014 concerning the protection of women and other family members from domestic violence had been submitted to the parliament; whether the State party intended to establish a specific offence of marital rape; whether the definition of domestic violence set out in Act No. 293 would be brought into line with international standards; and whether the corporal punishment of children constituted a specific offence. It would be helpful if the delegation could indicate the status of the bill on sexual harassment in the workplace, the proposed timeline for its adoption and the penalties for which it would provide.

20. She wished to know the current minimum age for marriage; whether bills had been proposed to establish a minimum age for marriage in line with international standards; what exceptions were provided for in that regard; and whether the State party intended to amend articles 505 and 518 of the Criminal Code with a view to ensuring that rapists were punished irrespective of whether or not the victim was a minor. With regard to education, it would be useful to learn whether a compulsory course on gender equality was taught in public and private schools and whether there was a specialized body to facilitate access to justice for women and protect women who were victims of violence.

21. With regard to so-called "honour crimes", she wondered whether the mitigating circumstances provided for under articles 252 and 562 of the Criminal Code remained in

force and, if so, whether the State party planned to amend those articles. She would appreciate statistics on the prevalence of violence against women, including domestic violence and rape, and in particular wished to know the numbers of investigations, prosecutions and convictions, what penalties had been imposed on perpetrators and what compensation had been awarded to victims.

22. **Mr. Politi** said that he would be grateful if the delegation could confirm that, under Legislative Decree No. 102/83, a state of emergency could be declared in which non-compliance with the State party's non-derogable obligations under the Covenant was authorized. If that was indeed the case, he wondered whether the Decree stipulated that such derogations should remain limited to those that were strictly required by the exigencies of the situation. It would be instructive to discover what guarantees were in place to ensure that the exceptional powers granted to the military during a state of emergency were exercised in compliance with article 4 of the Covenant. One of those powers, namely the power to "prosecute persons who breached security and refer them to the courts", called for clarification. Would the military be given true prosecutorial powers? It was unclear whether such prosecutions would be led by special prosecutors' offices within military courts or whether they would be handled by military commanders or other high-level officers within the military. Clarification was also needed regarding the procedure for extending a state of emergency, as it seemed that multiple consecutive extensions were currently possible. Overall, he wished to know whether the State party planned to amend or replace the existing legislative framework with a view to bringing it into line with article 4 of the Covenant, both in terms of its substance and in terms of the procedural requirement for the State party to inform the other States parties to the Covenant, through the intermediary of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, of the provisions from which it had derogated.

23. He would be grateful if the delegation could confirm that, under article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the 48-hour time limit for formally charging an arrested person and referring his or her case to a prosecutor could be extended in cases of crimes against State security and indicate whether any other limitations to the right to due process and fair trial were provided for in that context. He wished to know on what legal basis private security groups and the so-called "legal and security committees" were able to arrest and hold individuals in pretrial detention. As military intelligence officers were also authorized to conduct arrests without a warrant in certain circumstances, he wondered how frequent such practices of arbitrary detention were and whether statistics were available on legal proceedings or criminal trials conducted on the basis of such arrests. It would be useful to learn how long it took on average for an arrested person to be brought before a judge. On a related point, he would be grateful for more information, including statistics for the previous five years, if possible, on the pretrial detention of children.

24. He would appreciate updated statistics on the number of pretrial detainees held in prisons, the average duration of pretrial detention and cases in which persons placed in pretrial detention for an extended period had been denied access to a lawyer. He wished to know the practical impact on suspects of the legal uncertainty surrounding the question of whether or not lawyers had the right to attend interrogations of their clients during preliminary investigations. Was it the case that arrested persons were frequently held at police stations for hours or days before being able to exercise their right to contact a lawyer? With regard to alternative measures to pretrial detention, he invited the delegation to indicate whether the investigating judge was required to consult the Office of the Public Prosecutor before ordering an alternative measure, whether the outcome of such a consultation was binding on the investigating judge, how many defendants had been granted alternative measures in the previous three years and in what percentage of cases the Office of the Public Prosecutor had supported the investigative judge's position.

25. **Mr. Koita** said that he would be grateful for updates on the efforts being made to abolish the death penalty, including the 2012 bill on the abolition of the death penalty, and on the implementation of the National Human Rights Plan, which called on the Government to endorse General Assembly resolution 62/149 and to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the Covenant, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty. Could the delegation outline the proposed timelines for those two processes? Pending the total

abolition of the death penalty, he wondered whether the State party would consider bringing its legislative framework into line with the Committee's draft general comment No. 36 by restricting the imposition of the death penalty to crimes of extreme gravity involving intentional killing and whether it would undertake a reform of that framework and set a timeline for the completion of the process. If relevant, could the State party explain any remaining challenges in that connection?

26. Despite State programmes to improve living conditions at such facilities, overcrowding remained widespread at prisons and detention centres. He would like to hear about the use of cells at the Baabda Palais de Justice for indefinite detention. In addition, he would welcome information on measures taken to investigate the 81 deaths which had occurred in prisons between 2012 and 2016. He wished to know whether the Government was prepared to consider limiting the length of pretrial detention as a means of addressing overcrowding in the prison system; renovate and expand infrastructure in order to improve detention conditions; ensure the segregation of juvenile offenders from adult offenders and of remand detainees from convicted persons; and discontinue the practice of detaining child refugees and child asylum seekers.

27. **Mr. de Frouville** said that he would like to know whether the State party planned to repeal legislation establishing an amnesty for political offences (Act No. 84 of 1991) and to draft legislation which would stipulate the exclusion of enforced disappearance and other offences from such an amnesty. It would be useful to learn whether any cases of enforced disappearance had been prosecuted. The fundamental right of families to know the fate of their relatives was recognized under international humanitarian and human rights law. He wished to know whether the State party intended to establish legislation enshrining that right. Information on the number of cases of enforced disappearance that had been resolved would be welcome. In addition, he would like to hear more about the investigations into the mass graves in respect of which a summary judge had issued a decision, in 2009, to uphold the fundamental right to know the truth about the fate of a disappeared person. He also wished to know whether there were plans to keep an official register of the statements made by the relatives of disappeared persons or to create a DNA database of the families concerned.

28. He would appreciate information on the steps taken to establish a comprehensive reparation programme for families; he would also be interested to hear whether any reparations had been granted thus far. Clarification on the country's personal status laws, and on the identification of individuals as either "missing" or "absent", would be useful. He would welcome information on the bill which provided for the establishment of an independent body responsible for the victims of enforced disappearance; he would appreciate an update on the possible ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

29. He would like more information on abortion, including the number of cases of legal and illegal abortions per year; whether therapeutic abortion was covered by social insurance; and how the State party dealt with circumstances hindering access to abortion.

30. **Mr. Santos Pais** said that although the recent adoption of Act No. 65, which established torture as a separate offence, was commendable, the Act did not comply with recommendations issued by the Committee against Torture regarding matters such as punishment for the offence and the applicability of a statute of limitations. Given that it did not address the jurisdiction of the military court over cases of torture involving State agents, he wondered whether the Act was applicable in such courts.

31. The State party's replies to the list of issues seemed to indicate that investigation into a case of torture could be launched only if the victim had filed a complaint. He would like to know whether ex officio criminal proceedings could be initiated by a prosecutor upon notification of the occurrence of torture at a detention centre, and if so, which prosecutor would be competent in such cases. He would be interested to learn whether a specific unit of the Public Prosecutor's Office handled cases of torture; whether there was an official protocol for dealing with such cases; and whether the Public Prosecutor's Office kept statistics on the cases investigated. He would also appreciate information on the relevant training given to prosecutors.

32. He wished to hear about the outcome of the case concerning the acts of torture perpetrated at Roumieh prison, including information as to whether the victims had received full reparation. He would also welcome information on the work of the Committee for Protection from Torture. It would be interesting to hear the State party's comments on allegations regarding the torture of detainees in military custody; the existence of secret detention centres; and the torture and ill-treatment of drug users, sex workers, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons in the custody of the Internal Security Forces. He would appreciate it if the delegation could elaborate on the features of the security forces strategy for 2018 to 2022.

33. He would welcome further information on the efforts made by the Government to ensure accountability for torture in all settings. In addition, he would find it useful to learn about how the State party intended to collect and publish information on cases of torture, including details such as the sentences handed down to perpetrators. Finally, it would be helpful to hear about the current status of the witness protection system for alleged torture victims and about the rehabilitation and compensation of victims.

The meeting was suspended at 4.50 p.m. and resumed at 5.15 p.m.

34. **Ms. Akoum** (Lebanon) said that the Constitution placed particular importance on the international instruments to which Lebanon was party, including the Covenant. In addition, many judgments handed down by the courts regarding matters such as non-refoulement and freedom of movement complied with its provisions. Judges regularly received training on human rights and the Beirut Bar Association held an annual meeting to discuss the principles of the Covenant. Human rights education had been incorporated into all curricula at the Lebanese University.

35. **Ms. Al Nouairi** (Lebanon) said that Lebanese civil law drew no distinction between men and women, who had equal rights. The religious laws on personal status could not be said to oppress women; moreover, civil law was designed to complement the provisions on personal status. There had at one time been a strong push to introduce legislation on civil marriage but for the moment social and economic circumstances did not permit such a step. Marriages contracted by Lebanese nationals abroad or before a notary in Lebanon were recognized by the State.

36. **Ms. Al Hayek Massaad** (Lebanon) said that the National Strategy for Women 2011–2021, approved by the Council of Ministers in 2012, aimed to accord full citizenship rights on an equal footing to both men and women. Women's rights and opportunities were promoted in the media and in education, and women's equal rights to health, particularly reproductive health, were recognized. The Ministry of Social Affairs had adopted a poverty reduction plan and there were moves to amend any legislation that discriminated against women in the economic and business spheres.

37. **Ms. Akoum** (Lebanon) said that the Council of Ministers was drafting a bill to permit Lebanese women to transmit their nationality to their children. In addition, moves were under way to facilitate the granting of residence permits to foreign spouses of Lebanese women and also to their children. In the meantime foreign spouses were granted courtesy permits for two or three years, on a renewable basis.

38. **Mr. Al Maghribi** (Lebanon) said that the Minister of State for Human Rights treated all organizations for the defence of homosexual rights on an equal footing. The Minister had held a workshop the previous month for all gay rights organizations in order to canvass their views on the Ministry's strategy for the future. The activities to mark the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia had not been cancelled but postponed, and had been held one week later.

39. **Mr. El Ghossainy** (Lebanon) said that all citizens, regardless of their sexual orientation or personal convictions, had the right to make complaints. The four judgments handed down in such cases by specialized instances had gone beyond the requirements of the Penal Code and had been in line with the relevant provisions of international law. There was no campaign on the part of the security forces against members of such groups in respect of actions that took place in private; they would however act on complaints

regarding actions in public places. In that regard, the Ministry of the Interior had taken action against certain groups in the interests of maintaining public order.

40. **Ms. Akoum** (Lebanon) said that the proposed amendments to the legislation on domestic violence abolished the concept of "conjugal rights"; moreover, they were fully in line with the provisions of international law inasmuch as they addressed the abuse of power within the family, adopted the principle of judicial specialization in prosecution and investigation, and applied the age of majority rather than the age of custody in order to better protect children. She wished to point out that the reference in the list of issues (CCPR/C/LBN/Q/3, para. 8 (d)) to the "precedence of customary and personal status laws" over the provisions of Law No. 293 was not correct. All items of legislation adopted by Parliament had the same rank.

41. As to the penalties for rape, the repeal of article 522 of the Penal Code had removed the possibility of citing marriage to the victim as a mitigating circumstance and rapists would be punished regardless of the age of the victim. Articles 505 and 508, which perpetuated the effects of article 522, were to be applied at the court's discretion taking full account of the victim's circumstances. A bill to amend those articles had been submitted to Parliament.

42. **Mr. Al Maghribi** (Lebanon) said that a bill penalizing sexual harassment in the workplace and in public places had been submitted to Parliament. A copy would be transmitted to the Committee.

43. **Mr. El Ghossainy** (Lebanon) said that the internal security forces, working with civil society, had set up a centre to receive and investigate women's complaints of domestic violence and provide temporary shelter. The courts could also refer victims to secret shelters run by special units. The prosecutor's office at the Court of Cassation had requested the police in each province to begin investigating family and domestic violence under the supervision of the competent prosecutors; procedures would be closely monitored by the heads of the human rights sections in the internal security forces. A complaints hotline had been set up and a computerized system devised to analyse incoming data as a basis for recommendations. It was clear that the law of silence had been broken: the number of complaints had increased sharply in the past three years, with 290 registered in 2017. Training in dealing with the victims of domestic violence had been provided to the police and internal security forces in cooperation with NGOs; more than 50 sessions had been organized to date. Human rights was now a topic covered in the further training provided to the security forces.

44. **Ms. Al Hayek Massaad** (Lebanon) said that the new Elections Act adopted in 2017 ensured the proper representation of all sectors of society. For the May 2018 elections, 111 out of the 971 candidates were women, as compared with a mere 12 in 2009. The 2016 municipal elections had given women 5.6 per cent of the seats on local councils, as compared with 4 per cent in 2010. In addition, legislation adopted in 2017 had given married women the right to stand for election in the municipality in which they had lived before their marriage.

45. All sectors of Government encouraged women's participation and in some areas the numbers of women exceeded those of men. Women occupied 32 per cent of key posts in public administrations and accounted for 15 out of 68 of the country's ambassadors, and women lawyers would soon outnumber male lawyers. Women accounted for 24 per cent of the medical corps, 18 per cent of engineers and 70 per cent of pharmacists. In academia women and men were represented roughly equally. Many key posts in the print and audiovisual media were held by women.

46. **Mr. Kamal** (Lebanon) said that the State was stepping up its efforts to sensitize military institutions to human rights issues. A directorate of human rights had been established to deal with allegations of torture or of any other human rights violations. It was required to coordinate with international organizations and government bodies.

47. Legislative Decree No. 102/83, on the declaration of states of emergency, did not prevail over article 4 of the Covenant, which took precedence in the event of a conflict of provisions, as it did in respect of all Lebanese legislation. Despite repeated crises such as

terrorism on the country's borders, no state of emergency had been declared since 1996, nor did the State of Lebanon have any intention of declaring a state of emergency.

48. **Ms. Akoum** (Lebanon) said that the death penalty was applied in conformity with the provisions of the Covenant, namely in respect of only the most serious crimes. Moreover it could be applied only by special decree of the Executive. In fact the death penalty had not been applied since 2014, in effect ushering in a moratorium, and paving the way for abolition of the death penalty. Since 2011 the courts had been authorized to commute the death penalty to a prison sentence. As to the scope of the concept of "most serious crimes", the view of the State of Lebanon was that drugs trafficking constituted an extremely serious offence given that narcotics could wipe out an entire generation. The penalty was therefore in proportion to the gravity of the offence, which could be equated with premeditated murder.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.